

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 27, 2005

Honorable Gale Norton  
Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton,

On Wednesday, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced its decision to delay its original proposal to delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse for six months. This delay was based upon a recently completed report by Dr. Tim King of the United States Geological Survey. As you know, the FWS announced it "will reopen the public comment period for 60 days to solicit additional information and provide additional time for the Service, peer reviewers, and the public to examine and comment on Dr. King's report and all other available information." We are extremely disappointed by this decision, and strongly urge you to reconsider this extension.


While the delegation agrees that all evidence should be considered in any decision to remove a species from the endangered species list, we also believe the Department of the Interior has had sufficient time to consider this situation. As you know, the Preble's mouse has been listed since May 13, 1998. On February 2, 2005, the Department published a 12-month finding on the petition to delist and proposed delisting of the Preble's mouse.


The Department of the Interior has had more than 7 years to review whether the Preble's meadow jumping mouse is a distinct species. Now, nearly one year after the Department proposed delisting of the species, it appears the target has moved and the final decision is again delayed. It is time to delist the mouse.


The announcement reaffirms our belief that the Endangered Species Act must be updated and modernized. In this case, a process which was set in motion based upon scientific evidence, which the Department of the Interior believed was sufficient, is being held up. This announcement showcases the difficulties that landowners, ranchers, sportsmen and local communities face in working to remove a species from the endangered species list.

Thank you for your immediate consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to remove the Preble's meadow jumping mouse from the endangered species list.

Sincerely,

  
Craig Thomas  
United States Senator

  
Michael B. Enzi  
United States Senator

  
Barbara Cubin  
Member of Congress

cc: H. Dale Hall